

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES:  
DEVELOPMENT OF GRAND STRATEGY**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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Of the many fundamental changes legislated by the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, the requirement for the President to submit an annual comprehensive report to the United States Congress on the national security strategy of the United States is arguably the most far reaching.

The National Security Strategy report was envisioned to be the preeminent document used to define the worldwide interests, goals and objectives of the United States. This report was to include: a comprehensive description and discussion of the foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and national defense capabilities of the United States; the proposed short-term and long-term uses of the elements of national power required to protect and promote the interests and achieve the stated goals and objectives; and to provide an assessment of the capabilities of the United States to implement its national security strategy.

This paper will explore the origins and development of national security strategy in the United States. It will examine the requirement and the content of the annual report the President is required to develop and submit to Congress, as mandated by the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986. This paper will then outline and analyze the 1987, 1988, 1994, 1998, and 2002 National Security Strategy Reports. The purpose is to determine whether or not they achieve the intent of Goldwater-Nichols by providing a unifying (grand) strategy for the United States. These five reports were selected because they represent, in the author's opinion, new or significant changes in the thinking and direction of U.S. national security strategy.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	III
<b>THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES: DEVELOPMENT OF GRAND STRATEGY</b> .....	1
<b>BACKGROUND: HISTORICAL RETROSPECTIVE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL SECURITY STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED STATES.</b> .....	1
<b>THE GOLDWATER-NICHOLS ACT OF 1986</b> .....	3
<b>AN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE ON NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY</b> .....	5
<b>A NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF ENGAGEMENT AND ENLARGEMENT</b> .....	8
<b>A NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY FOR A NEW CENTURY</b> .....	10
<b>A NEW AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE ON NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY.</b> .....	11
<b>WHAT DOES THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY ACCOMPLISH?</b> .....	14
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	15
<b>ENDNOTES</b> .....	17
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	21



## **THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES: DEVELOPMENT OF GRAND STRATEGY**

The fundamental purpose of national security strategy is to provide a comprehensive strategy that balances the ends, ways, and means of the elements of national power to achieve national security and to protect, preserve and promote a way of life. When successful, this process results in the development of a grand (unifying) strategy that combines values and interests with a strategic appraisal that leads to a series of national policies that are articulated in a unifying strategy. This strategy then serves as a unifying document for the national government.<sup>1</sup>

This paper will examine the origins and development of national security strategy in the United States. It will examine the requirement and the content of the annual report the President is required to develop and submit to Congress, as mandated by the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986. This paper will then outline and analyze the 1987, 1988, 1994, 1998, and 2002 National Security Strategy Reports. The purpose is to determine whether or not they achieve the intent of Goldwater-Nichols by providing a unifying (grand) strategy for the United States. These five reports were selected because they represent, in the author's opinion, new or significant changes in the thinking and direction of U.S. national security strategy.

### **BACKGROUND: HISTORICAL RETROSPECTIVE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL SECURITY STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED STATES.**

One of the fundamental ways to achieve national security is to provide the required government institutions and mechanisms that; organize the defense establishment, unify the armed forces, harness science to military purposes, mobilize military manpower, and distribute the cost of defense across the national economy.<sup>2</sup>

For most Americans, the golden age of isolationism ended on December 7, 1941 with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. With the end of World War II came the realization that the United States and the world had entered a new era of global ideological competition.<sup>3</sup> For the United States, this journey towards defining and refining a national security structure and strategy began during the Second World War and was first formally articulated in the National Security Act of 1947.

The end of the Second World War brought two fundamentally different political philosophies to the fore in the debate over the future course of American's role in the world. The first was associated with the older conservative political culture that feared the development of a strong national security state that would endanger the basic values, principles, and

institutions associated with American democracy. They were convinced that a strong national security structure would waste resources, regiment the nation's youth, and concentrate too much authority in the national government and in particular the military. This group also was concerned that the creation of a strong executive branch would undermine basic constitutional balance between the Congress and the executive branch.<sup>4</sup>

The second, was the new ideology of national security and an active role in world events. This ideology stressed that the United States had entered an era of total war and this new threat required a new degree of military vigilance and preparedness in which all of the nation's resources were mobilized for the defense of America. Further, they believed it was not impossible to separate the defense of American liberties from the defense of liberties everywhere in the world.<sup>5</sup> "Peace and freedom were indivisible, so that American leadership had no choice but to safeguard the country's security by safeguarding the security of the free world in general."<sup>6</sup>

In the end, as in all political processes in a democratic society, the debate between the two fundamentally different philosophies ended in a compromise that was inevitably necessary in order to produce a majority consensus on the issue of national defense. Strategy formulation is not a rational and systemic process. In fact, it is an intensely political process from which national strategy emerges after protracted bargaining and compromise.<sup>7</sup>

The roots of the National Security Act of 1947 can be traced back to the preparations for and execution of military operations during the First and Second World Wars and the battle between the executive and legislative branches of government as well as internal battles inside the War Department and between the War Department and the Department of the Navy.<sup>8</sup> The primary fault lines were; battles between the Army and Navy over the role of airpower, the realization that the nation's security structure could no longer be based on one organizational structure for peace and a different one for war, Army and Navy disagreement over post-war roles, and missions, collapse of the peacetime national security planning and decision making structure, the lack of true Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the fundamental need to unify the armed services under a single department of defense headed by a cabinet rank civilian secretary.<sup>9</sup>

In recognition of the need for greater unity, coordination, and integration for national defense purposes, The National Security Act was enacted in July of 1947. This act established our modern national security structure by creating a host of new agencies, including the National Security Council, National Security Resources Board, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.<sup>10</sup>

It also created the National Military Establishment by merging the United States Department of War and the United States Department of the Navy. This new executive branch agency was to be headed by the Secretary of Defense, a cabinet rank civilian secretary and would consist of three autonomous executive departments, the Army, Navy, and Air Force, as well as several other staff and coordinating boards.<sup>11</sup>

The 1947 National Security Act was not without controversy and political infighting, especially among the Army and Navy, which stood to lose autonomy and status, and the Congress, which stood to lose access and influence. While the Secretary of Defense was designated the principal assistant to the president on national security issues, his authority, power, and the size of his staff were purposely limited.<sup>12</sup> The service secretaries retained their cabinet-level status, were full voting members of the National Security Council, and possessed direct access to the president.<sup>13</sup> The net result was a weak secretary of defense and a less than efficient national defense structure.

The first major change to the National Security Act of 1947 was codified in the 1949 Amendments to the National Security Act of 1947. These amendments removed the service secretaries from the National Security Council, clarified their subordination to the Secretary of Defense, and established the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but without command authority or the right to vote with the Joint Chiefs.<sup>14</sup> The net result was to significantly strengthen the powers of the Secretary of Defense by making him “the central figure in coordinating the activities of the three services, who were to continue to be “separately administered, but not merged.”<sup>15</sup>

The Defense Reorganization Act of 1958 continued the trend of unifying the armed services and further refined the relationships between the services and the secretary of defense. The military departments were to be “separately organized” rather than “administered”, and were placed under the “direction, authority, and control” of the Secretary of Defense.<sup>16</sup> Congress also explicitly granted the Secretary of Defense the authority to reorganize the military departments, and defined the chain of command to be from the President through the Secretary of Defense to the theater commanders. This Act also authorized the creation of specified and combined or unified commands, and provided the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with voting power on the JCS.<sup>17</sup>

#### **THE GOLDWATER-NICHOLS ACT OF 1986**

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 is the most comprehensive defense reorganization package since the National Security Act of 1947. This

act was the fourth major revision of the National Security Act of 1947 and the third post-World War II reorganization of the Department of Defense. It is one of the more than 2,000 reports that federal departments, agencies, commissions, and bureaus must submit to Congress each year. With this act the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress sought to: strengthen civilian control of the Department of Defense, improve military advice to civilian leadership, clarify the authority and responsibilities of the combatant commanders, improve strategy formulation and contingency planning, and to provide for more efficient use of defense resources.<sup>18</sup>

One of the new and potentially far reaching changes contained in the Goldwater-Nichols Act was the requirement for the President to submit an annual report to the Congress detailing the national security strategy of the United States.<sup>19</sup> Goldwater-Nichols requires the President to submit an annual national security strategy report to the Congress that provides a comprehensive description and discussion of the following:

- The worldwide interest, goals, and objectives of the United States that are vital to the national security of the United States.
- The foreign policy, worldwide commitments and national defense capabilities of the United States necessary to deter aggression and to implement the national security strategy of the United States.
- The proposed short-term and long-term uses of political, economic, military, and other elements of national power of the United States to protect or promote the interests and achieve the goals and objectives of the United States.
- The adequacy of the capabilities of the United States to carry out the national security strategy of the United States, including an evaluation of the balance among the capabilities of all elements of national power of the United States to support the implementation of the national security strategy.
- Such other measures as may be helpful to inform Congress on matters relating to the national security strategy of the United States.
- Each national security strategy report shall be transmitted in both classified and unclassified form.<sup>20</sup>

The intent of the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress was to focus the discussions and debates on U.S. national security strategy by requiring the President to codify a grand strategy for the United States in terms of national interests, goals, objectives, and values; its coherence in terms of relating ends, ways, and means; the integration of the element of national power; and its time horizon.<sup>21</sup> “In

theory, at least to the reformers, a clearly written strategy would serve the Congress better on the needs for resources to execute the strategy, thus facilitating the annual authorization and appropriation processes, particularly for the Department of Defense."<sup>22</sup>

## **AN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE ON NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY**

The first two national security strategy reports were developed and published during the final two years of the Reagan presidency. Both of these reports provided the American people and the world a uniquely American view on national security strategy.

Since the Goldwater-Nichols Act was not passed until late 1986, the National Security Strategy Report of 1987 was prepared in a limited period of time and reflected current U.S. strategic thinking and direction.<sup>23</sup> This first national security strategy report contained several fundamental components now considered to be integral to any discussion of United States national security strategy.

The Reagan Administration's first report contains sections that outlined the current thinking on American national security strategy. These sections are titled: An American Perspective, Fundamentals of U.S. National Security Strategy, U.S. Foreign Policy, and U.S. Defense Policy, Executing the Strategy, and Looking Forward to the 1990's.

In the section titled An American Perspective, the Reagan Administration offered that they had already "laid the foundation for a more constructive and positive American role in world affairs by clarifying the essential elements of U.S. foreign and defense policy."<sup>24</sup> Further, the administration offered that they had also objectively reviewed and adjusted U.S. policies to reflect the "dynamics of a complex and ever-changing world."<sup>25</sup>

In Fundamentals of U.S. National Security Strategy, the Administration highlighted the leadership role the United States had assumed following the end of the Second World War and offered that this role would continue into the future. The 1987 report established the now familiar concept of identifying and using national interests as a guiding principle of U.S. strategy. The five U.S. interests identified were: the survival of the United States as a free and independent nation, with its fundamental values and institutions intact; a healthy and growing U.S. economy; the growth of freedom, democratic institutions and free market economies throughout the world, linked by a fair and open international trading system; a stable and secure world, free of major threats to U.S. interests; and the health and vigor of U.S. alliance relationships.<sup>26</sup> In support of U.S. interests, this report detailed five major objectives in support of the articulated national interests of the United States.<sup>27</sup> It identified the Soviet Union as the "most significant threat to U.S. security and national interests."<sup>28</sup> It also recognized international

terrorism as a an additional threat, “which is particularly insidious in nature and growing in scope.”<sup>29</sup>

This report also outlined three distinct elements of U.S. strategy that had and would continue to be used to contain the Soviet Union. The first element, U.S. Defense Policy, involved the forward deployment of military forces necessary to deter and contain Soviet military expansion. The second element, U.S. International Economic Policy, involved economic recovery programs for Western Europe and Japan and established U.S. leadership in establishing and managing the international monetary system, and encouraging regional and global free-trade agreements. The final element, U.S. Policy Toward the Third World, included both economic and security assistance to counter Soviet efforts to establish Marxist-Leninist regimes.<sup>30</sup>

The section on U.S. Foreign Policy, described how, in very general terms, the U.S. worked to sustain her foreign policy goals by fostering the growth of democracy and global economic vitality. This section focused on the areas of: continuity of basic goals, instruments of foreign policy, international economic policy, and political and informational elements of power. It also included a sub-section describing U.S. regional policies, however, these were mainly focused on the contributions of the military instrument of power.<sup>31</sup>

The largest section of the 1987 report, U.S. Defense Policy, detailed the Administration’s current strategy of military containment of the Soviet Union. The tenets of the current U.S. defense strategy included: taking advantage of U.S. strengths and soviet weaknesses, maintenance of a strategic deterrence, arms control, maintenance of conventional deterrence, space support of national security, intelligence support of national security, and low intensity conflict. Taken together the sections detailing U.S Foreign Policy and U.S. Defense Policy, clearly demonstrated the Reagan Administration’s strong emphasis on the military instrument of power for achieving U.S. goals and objectives and protecting U.S. interests.<sup>32</sup>

The 1987 Report concluded by restating the reasoning for identifying the Soviet Union as the principal threat to U.S. as well as to global peace and stability. It clearly and succinctly highlighted the fundamental differences in economic, social, and political beliefs, the expansionist policies of the Soviets, the unprecedented Soviet military build-up and its threats to the U.S. and her allies, and the link between the Soviet Union and the growth of global terrorism. While the report also briefly warns that the U.S. must not neglect other destabilizing international threats and problems, which can seriously damage U.S. interests, it does not detail the specific regions, nations, or threats.<sup>33</sup>

The first National Security Strategy of the United States provided a clearly articulated view of current American strategic thinking. The report described how the United States viewed itself in the world. It contained a comprehensive description of U.S. national interests, goals, and objectives and provided a description of U.S. foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and the national defense capabilities required for the U.S. to contain the Soviet Union. While it provided a comprehensive description of both the short-term and long-term uses of the military element of power, it failed to articulate a methodology for integrating the remaining elements of power into the overall strategy.

This report reflected the Reagan Administration's strong emphasis on the military instrument of power, almost to the exclusion of the others. Taken as a whole, the report detailed a comprehensive strategic approach towards containing the Soviet Union. It failed to fully integrate the other elements of national power into the strategic equation and it also failed to provide a true global perspective due to its focus on the Soviets. Therefore, the 1987 Report did not meet the intent of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of providing a grand strategy for the United States.

The 1988 National Security Strategy Report represented the first true grand strategy submitted to the Congress as mandated by the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986. With the dual challenges of the federal budget deficit and the international trade deficit on the political agenda<sup>34</sup> the Reagan Administration made two major changes to the 1987 report. The first was to emphasize all elements of national power into an integrated strategy.<sup>35</sup> The second was to develop and present separate strategies for each region that also integrated all of the elements of national power.<sup>36</sup>

This report consisted of five sections: Historical Dimensions of U.S. National Security Strategy, Fundamentals of U.S. National Security Strategy, Power, Policy, and Strategy; Integrating Elements of Power into National Security Strategy, and Executing the Strategy<sup>37</sup> and the overarching strategy was based on continuing the policy of containing the Soviet Union.<sup>38</sup>

In the Historical Dimensions of U.S. National Security Strategy section, the Reagan Administration offered that U.S. security strategy had changed little since World War II. They argued that U.S. core interests and objectives had remained consistent and that the combination of the elements of U.S. national power<sup>39</sup> had always been important contributors to our past, present, and future security.

The section on Fundamentals of U.S. National Security Strategy contained five U.S. national interests.<sup>40</sup> While slight modifications were made to the content of the national interest from the 1987 report, the national interests articulated in the two documents are basically

identical. This report also articulated a set of five major objectives in support of stated U.S. interests and these objectives are also fundamentally the same as those contained in the 1987 Report.<sup>41</sup>

The 1988 report also identified the Soviet Union as the principal threat to U.S. and global security interests. It does acknowledge that as a result of changes in leadership style, the Soviet Union has succeeded in projecting a more favorable international image and that proposed domestic reforms and foreign policy initiatives have given rise to hopes for fundamental changes in Soviet behavior. The report acknowledged that threats to U.S. and international interests also exist in the Middle East, Central and South America, Southeast Asia, and the continuing threat created by the proliferation of nuclear weapons.<sup>42</sup>

The 1988 Report contained two major additions when compared to the 1987 report. The first was an emphasis on all the elements of national power in order to provide an integrated strategy.<sup>43</sup> In the section on Power, Policy, and Strategy, the Reagan Administration provided a clear vision of how all elements of U.S. national power would be used to protect and further the national interests of the United States. This section also described how U.S. diplomatic, defense, and economic policies would be used to achieve U.S. goals and objectives.<sup>44</sup>

The second major addition was to outline a set of separate strategies for each region of the world. In the section on integrating elements of power into national security strategy, the Administration provided a concept for integrating the elements of U.S. national power into a strategy designed to achieve U.S. goals and objectives on a regional basis.<sup>45</sup>

The second National Security Strategy Report of the United States provided a clear and comprehensive U.S. security strategy. The report contained the basic framework of values, interests, and national security objectives still in use today. It described how the U.S. intended to use all of the elements of national power to achieve her stated security goals. Most significantly, it provided integrated strategies for achieving and sustaining global U.S. goals and objectives. In the final analysis, the 1988 Report meets the intent of Goldwater-Nichols by providing the Congress a grand strategy for the United States.

## **A NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF ENGAGEMENT AND ENLARGEMENT**

The Clinton Administration published its first national security strategy report in June 1994 nearly eighteen months into its first term.<sup>46</sup> This report represented the first true post-Cold War concept of U.S. security strategy and was the first significant change in U.S. security strategy since 1987. It reflected the changed global landscape, the organization of the Executive Branch

of the Clinton Administration, and the existing political climate in Washington, D.C. and the nation.<sup>47</sup>

The 1994 National Security Strategy Report contains four sections: Introduction, Advancing Our Interests Through Engagement and Enlargement, Integrated Regional Approaches, and Conclusions. This report reflected a clear change in the direction and thinking of how the U.S. would work to achieve its national security goals and objectives. It also established the three central goals, found in all seven Clinton Administration National Security Strategy Reports, to credibly sustain our security with military forces that are ready to fight, bolster America's economic revitalization, and promoting democracy abroad.<sup>48</sup>

In the Introductory Section, the Clinton Administration acknowledged that a new era had dawned for the world. The "end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet empire brought about a radically transformed security environment" and a "corresponding period of great promise, but also great uncertainty."<sup>49</sup> It clearly articulated that the United States was the preeminent global power and that her leadership in the world had never been more important. This section also highlighted the rise of transnational terrorism, narcotics trafficking, environmental degradation, rapid population growth, and refugee flows as threats to global and U.S. security.<sup>50</sup>

The largest and arguably most important section of the 1994 report is titled, Advancing Our Interests Through Engagement and Enlargement. This part of the strategy detailed the direction and strategic thinking of the administration. It stressed the need to use preventive diplomacy and selected engagement as the primary tools for achieving U.S. goals and objectives. This section also contained a sub-section highlighting the tangible accomplishments of the Clinton Administration during its first seventeen months.<sup>51</sup>

This report also reflected a much broader definition of "security" than used by earlier administrations. With the new strategic environment and the lack of a clear military threat to the nation's physical security, the Clinton Administration defined security as "protecting our people, our territory, and our way of life."<sup>52</sup> The strategy was designed to take advantage of the "opportunities to make the nation more safe and prosperous"<sup>53</sup> as well as protecting it from a new class of security threats.

The 1994 report contained only three fundamental national security goals: enhancing our security, promoting prosperity at home, and promoting democracy.<sup>54</sup> "There is a simple elegance in using only three national security goals to integrate all of the governments efforts to advance U.S. interests."<sup>55</sup>

The section on Integrated Regional Approaches, highlighted the Administration's approach towards the world's regions by providing broad regional objectives. It articulated that the U.S. policy toward each of the "world's regions reflects our overall strategy tailored to its unique challenges and opportunities. This section highlighted the application of U.S. strategy to each of the world's regions; our broad objectives and thrust, rather than an exhaustive list of all our policies and interests."<sup>56</sup> This approach failed to provide a detailed strategy for integrating all of the elements of national power required to secure regional U.S. goals and objectives.

The 1994 National Security Strategy Report reflected a major shift in U.S. security thinking and direction. This report contained a comprehensive description of the national security interests, goals, and objectives of the United States. It provided a description of the foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and national defense capabilities of the United States necessary to deter near-term and long-term threats. It also provided a thorough description of the short-term and long-term uses of the elements of national power to protect and promote U.S. interests. Finally, it described the necessary balance between the elements of national power required to achieve U.S. security goals and objectives.

In the final analysis, through the dual strategy of preventive diplomacy and selective engagement, the 1994 National Security Strategy Report met the intent of the Goldwater-Nichols Act by providing a grand strategy for the United States.

#### **A NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY FOR A NEW CENTURY**

The second National Security Strategy Report of the second Clinton Administration was published in October 1998. This report reflected the Administration's recognition of increased global economic interdependence, the Balanced Budget Agreement, the results of the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review, and an increasing awareness of the challenges presented by domestic terrorism.<sup>57</sup>

This report contains four basic sections: Introduction, Advancing U.S. National Interests, Integrated Regional Approaches, and Conclusions.<sup>58</sup> The 1998 report is similar in both structure and substance to the 1997 National Security Strategy Report and retains the three core U.S. objectives; of enhancing our security, bolstering America's economic prosperity, and promoting democracy abroad.<sup>59</sup> In general, differences between the two reports were of matters of emphasis and degree.<sup>60</sup>

In the Introductory Section, the Clinton Administration clearly establishes the national and international security environments have and will continue to undergo significant changes. "The security environment in which we live is dynamic and uncertain, replete with a host of threats

and challenges that have the potential to grow more deadly, but also offer unprecedented opportunities to avert those threats and advance our interests.”<sup>61</sup> It describes the challenges and opportunities of globalization, highlights the importance of continued U.S. engagement, and outlines how the Administration will implement the strategy to achieve the three core objectives of U.S. national security.

The section on Advancing U.S. National Interests, is the most important and far reaching section of the report. While the overall strategy remained based on three national objectives: enhancing our security, bolstering our economic prosperity and promoting democracy abroad,<sup>62</sup> it also established the precedence for categorizing U.S. national interests as either; vital interests, important national interests, and humanitarian and other interests.<sup>63</sup>

This section also outlined current and future threats to U.S. interests: regional or state-centered threats, transnational threats, spread of dangerous technologies, foreign intelligence collection, and failed states.<sup>64</sup> Finally, it highlighted the Clinton Administration’s continued focus on strategy implementation, built around the concepts of shaping the international environment, responding to threats and crises, preparing now for an uncertain future, and promoting prosperity.<sup>65</sup> Each of these areas contained an array of policy tools and objectives designed to achieve U.S. national security.

Similar to the 1994 Report, the section on integrating regional approaches, highlighted the Administration’s approach towards the world’s regions by providing broad regional objectives. However, this report provided a more coherent approach to attaining and maintaining U.S. goals by outlining the administrations strategy of enhancing security, promoting prosperity, and promoting democracy in each region.<sup>66</sup>

The 1998 National Security Strategy Report reflected the continuing trend of major shifts in U.S. national security thinking. This report contained a comprehensive description of U.S. national security interest, goals, and objectives. This included categorizing U.S. interests as, vital, important, or humanitarian and other. It provided a detailed description of the foreign policy, national defense capabilities, and worldwide commitments necessary to achieve U.S. goals and objectives. It demonstrated a more focused and integrated regional approach when compared to the 1994 report and, in the final analysis, provided Congress a grand strategy for the United States.

## **A NEW AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE ON NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY.**

The 2002 National Security Strategy Report was published in September 2002. This report clearly reflected the Bush Administration’s views on: U.S. national security, unparalleled

U.S. power, the changing strategic environment, and the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

This report contains nine sections<sup>67</sup> that outline the Administration's national security strategy and represents a fundamental change in the strategic thinking and direction of the United States. This strategy seeks to increase security and economic development by using unrivaled U.S. power and influence to expand freedom and open societies around the world. The underlying theme of the strategy is clearly captured in Bush's introductory letter, "The United States will use this moment of opportunity to expand the benefits of freedom across the globe. We will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free market, and free trade to every corner of the world."<sup>68</sup>

The 2002 Report deviates from the precedence of articulating clear national interests as the guiding principle for U.S. strategy. Instead, it offers three goals for U.S. national security and they are identified at the end of the following quote:

"The U.S. national security strategy will be based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests. The aim of the strategy is to help make the world not just safer but better. Our goals on the path to progress are clear: political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other nations, and respect for human dignity."<sup>69</sup>

This report clearly identifies rogue nations and transnational terrorist networks and their supporters as the principal threat to U.S. and global security interests. It outlines a strategy for defending the United States against these enemies and for defending and preserving peace on a global scale. This strategy is built on the foundation of strengthening, maintaining, developing new alliances against rogue nations and global terrorism. It also recognizes that the United States will be the lead nation in this campaign and that we must and will shoulder this burden.

The section on Working With Others to Defuse Regional Conflicts argues that "concerned nations must remain actively engaged in critical regional disputes to avoid escalation and minimize human suffering" and "that since the United States is a concerned nation it will be involved in regional disputes, along with friends and allies, to alleviate suffering and restore stability."<sup>70</sup> It recognizes that the U.S. has finite resources and establishes two strategic principles for U.S. involvement. The first principle is "the United States should invest time and resources into building international relationships and institutions that can help manage local crises when they emerge." The second principle is "the United States should be realistic about its ability to help those who are unwilling or unready to help themselves. Where and when people are ready to do their part, we will be willing to move decisively."<sup>71</sup> This section identifies

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, South Asia, Indonesia, parts of Latin America, and Africa as areas of importance to U.S. and global security.

The 2002 Report section on Igniting a New Era of Global Economic Growth through Free Markets and Free Trade outlines the Bush administration's strategy for enhancing a strong world economy. This strategy outlines seven policies<sup>72</sup> that are designed to generate higher productivity and sustained economic growth and details the U.S. plan for enhancing global trade by providing a ten point<sup>73</sup> strategy for promoting free trade.

The 2002 National Security Strategy Report is profoundly different in terms of tone. Two statements and one theme not only demonstrate this fundamental shift in U.S. strategic thinking and tone, but they are also frequently highlighted by segments of the world community who see the U.S. attempting to establish global hegemony. The two statements are contained in the documents opening section, Overview of America's International Strategy. The documents opening assertion that the "United States possesses unprecedented – and unequalled – strength and influence in the world"<sup>74</sup> is frequently combined with the statement that "the aim of this strategy is to help make the world not just safer, but better"<sup>75</sup>. When these two statements are viewed through the lens of the international community and combined with recent and ongoing U.S. military operations it is difficult to argue that the United States prefers multilateral over unilateral action.

A new emphasis on and broader definition of "preventive war" or "preemptive attack" remains the most controversial aspect of the report. The strategy proposes, and in fact the U.S. has conducted two major military operations to date, expanding the accepted concept of true preemption, striking first against an imminent, specific, and near certain attack, to the far broader concept of striking first to prevent a longer term threat from even developing. This broader definition of "preventive war" violates accepted International norms that were developed to prevent these destabilizing types of conflict resolution. It also runs the risk of establishing a new international precedent that other nations may adopt.

In broad terms the current Bush Administration strategy has a "reality versus rhetoric" mismatch that is unsustainable in its current form. Continued reliance on the military instrument of power combined with the broader definition of "preemptive attack" is simply unsustainable from economic, political, and especially military aspects. This current mismatch points to a potential lack of balance in the ends, ways, and means construct that enables the successful execution of a national security strategy.

The 2002 National Security Strategy Report reflects another clear shift in U.S. security thinking and direction. This change was once again driven by the changing character of the

threats facing the United States. While it is more descriptive than previous national security strategy reports, it does provide a comprehensive set of U.S. national interests, goals, and objectives. It provides a description of the foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and national defense capabilities of the United States required to deter near-term and long-term threats. This report also provides a description of the short-term and long-term uses of the elements of U.S. national power. It recognizes that the U.S. has limits to its national resources and provides a strategic balance between the various elements of national power in order to achieve U.S. security goals and objectives. In the end, while this report is different in form and structure from past reports, it meets the intent of Goldwater-Nichols and provides a grand strategy to the Congress of the United States.

## **WHAT DOES THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY ACCOMPLISH?**

The annual national security strategy report serves three primary purposes. First, it serves as a strategic communications document. Second, it is a unifying document for the Executive Branch, and third, it serves as the fundamental statement of the President's agenda.

As a strategic communications document the national security strategy report is designed to fulfill two primary purposes. The first is to communicate a grand strategy to the Congress. This strategy should provide the basis for the development of a common understanding between the Executive and Legislative Branches on the strategic environment, the administration's intent, the basis for determining the allocation of national resources and the uses of the elements of national power to achieve U.S. goals and objectives.<sup>76</sup> Second, it communicates the direction of U.S. national policy to a wide range of international and domestic audiences. International audiences include: allies, friends, neutral nations, as well as existing and potential adversaries. Domestic audiences include: political supporters and opponents, all of the various special interest groups, the defense and non-defense industrial base, as well as the American public.<sup>77</sup>

As a unifying document for the Executive Branch it is designed to create an internal consensus on foreign, defense, diplomatic, and economic strategy. "Every new and second-term administration faces this challenge as it transitions from campaign to governance, particularly if foreign policy has not been a major issue in the campaign."<sup>78</sup> This consensus is theoretically accomplished through the National Security Council and the interagency processes as the report is developed, staffed, and approved.

As the fundamental statement of the President's overall agenda the annual national security strategy report represent the cornerstone of an administrations strategic direction,

encompassing the allocation of national resources and the uses of the elements of national power to protect U.S. national interest and lead to the attainment of global and domestic U.S. goals and objectives.

While the Goldwater-Nichols Act requires the submission of an annual national security strategy report the track record is decidedly mixed and arguments have been made to revise Goldwater-Nichols to require a bi-annual submission, during the second and fourth years of an administration, of the national security strategy report. Three trends become readily apparent when studying the various national security strategy reports and their development. First, incoming administrations have limited time to prepare their first report. This already difficult timeframe can be further complicated if the incoming President has not finalized his cabinet or the Congress has yet to act on the incoming Administrations nominations. Second, the intense iterative nature of the interagency process itself has resulted in significant delays in submitting the report to Congress. Finally, a bi-annual process would provide all participants involved in the process the time necessary to assess the effectiveness of the current national security strategy and study alternative approaches prior to restarting the current annual process. These points provide the basic evidence necessary to consider revising Goldwater-Nichols and require the submission of a bi-annual national security strategy report.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Several conclusions about the development of U.S. national security strategy can be drawn from this essay. First, there is no overarching consensus on the appropriate grand strategy for the United States. This is driven primarily by the necessary political processes and compromises resident in any democratic form of government. "After all grand strategy is really the idea of allocating resources to create in both the short-term and long-term various instruments of power, instruments with which the nation then provides for its defense and the furtherance of its aims in the world."<sup>79</sup>

Second, since the first National Security Strategy Report was published in 1987, the U.S. has undergone several fundamental changes in strategic thinking and direction. These adjustments have been driven by changes in administrations as well as changes in the international and national security environments. Third, while different administrations have made adjustments to U.S. goals and objectives, our national interests have stood the test of time and remain consistent even in the face of radically different international and national security environments.

Finally, even though the “most evolved democracy in the world has the most cumbersome national security decision-making process, inefficiency is the price the founding fathers imposed for domestic accountability,”<sup>80</sup> this process has stood the test of time and protected U.S. national interests through some dramatic changes in the international and national landscapes.

WORD COUNT= 6, 280.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Robert H. Dorff, "A Primer in Strategy Development," eds., Joseph Cerami and James Holcomb, U.S. Army War College Guide To Strategy, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: United States Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, February 2001), 14-15.

<sup>2</sup> Michael J. Hogan, A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954. (New York,: Cambridge University Press , 1998), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 464.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 465.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 465.

<sup>7</sup> Don M. Snider, "The National Security Strategy: Documenting Strategic Vision," eds., Joseph Cerami and James Holcomb, U.S. Army War College Guide To Strategy, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: United States Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, February 2001), 129.

<sup>8</sup> Hogan, 23-67.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Melvyn P. Leffler, A Preponderance of Power: National Security, The Truman Administration and the Cold War (California: Stanford University Press, 1992), 175.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 176.

<sup>14</sup> Congressional Record, Daily ed., September 15, 1950, 15124.

<sup>15</sup> Frank N. Trager, "The National Security Act of 1947: Its Thirtieth Anniversary" ( Maxwell, Air Force Base, AL: Air University Review, November – December 1977) 6.

<sup>16</sup> Public Law 85-599, United States Code Congressional and Administrative News, 85<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session., vol. 1 (1959) 592, §2.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Douglas C. Lovelace, Jr., "The DoD Reorganization Act of 1986: Improving The Department Through Centralization and Integration," ed. Douglas T. Stuart, Organizing for National Security, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: United States Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, November 2000), 66.

<sup>19</sup> Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, Conference Report (99-824), p.5.

<sup>20</sup> 50 U.S.C. 402, (Title I of the National Security Act of 1947).

<sup>21</sup> Snider, 128.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>24</sup> National Security Strategy of the United States (January 1987), 1.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>27</sup> For a detailed look at the Major Objectives in Support of U.S. Interests, see National Security Strategy of the United States (January 1987), 4-7.

<sup>28</sup> National Security Strategy of the United States (January 1987), 6.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 9-18.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 19-32.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>34</sup> Snider, 131.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> National Security Strategy of the United States (January 1988), iii.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>39</sup> The Reagan administration added the element of geography to the other four basic elements of national power. National Security Strategy of the United States (January 1988), 2.

<sup>40</sup> National Security Strategy of the United States (January 1988), 3.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 3-5.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 35-40.

<sup>43</sup> Snider, 131.

<sup>44</sup> National Security Strategy of the United States (January 1988), 7-23.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> See Snider, 133-134 for a description of the reasons for the delay in publishing the first Clinton administration national security strategy report.

<sup>47</sup> Snider, 134.

<sup>48</sup> National Security Strategy of the United States (January 1994), i.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 1-3.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 5-18.

<sup>52</sup> Snider, 135.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> National Security Strategy of the United States (January 1994), 5.

<sup>55</sup> Snider, 135.

<sup>56</sup> National Security Strategy of the United States (July 1994), 21.

<sup>57</sup> Snider, 136.

<sup>58</sup> National Security Strategy of the United States (January 1998), i.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., iii.

<sup>60</sup> Snider, 136.

<sup>61</sup> National Security Strategy of the United States (January 1998), 1.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>63</sup> For a complete description of the three categories see, A National Security Strategy for a New Century (October 1998), 5-6.

<sup>64</sup> A National Security Strategy for a New Century (October 1998), 6-7.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 8-31.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 37-57.

<sup>67</sup> The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (October 2002), vii.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., iv.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> For a description of these seven policies, see The National Security Strategy of the United States (October 2002), 17.

<sup>73</sup> For a description of these ten points, see The National Security Strategy of the United States (October 2002), 18-20.

<sup>74</sup> The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (October 2002), 1.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Snider., 130.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Snider, 138.

<sup>80</sup> Gabriel Marcella, "National Security and the Interagency Process: Forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," eds., Joseph Cerami and James Holcomb, U.S. Army War College Guide To Strategy, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: United States Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, February 2001), 124.

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